First of all, I must express my gratitude to the contracting parties and to the secretariat of GATT for the co-operation extended to my country during the process of accession to the General Agreement which is at present going forward in accordance with the relevant procedures. I hope that in the near future Spain will become a contracting party to the General Agreement and that its participation can become daily more effective in relation to the objectives which the Contracting Parties have developed since its creation in order to implement the provisions of Article I of the General Agreement.

Next I should like to state some general principles concerning Spain's position in regard to the coming tariff negotiations.

1. On account both of the somewhat antiquated structure of various sectors of its economy and of the present state of its industry and the level of national per capita income, Spain is a country going through a process of development which will still require a period of time that cannot be determined exactly, in order to achieve the standard of living at present existing in the Western countries considered as being developed.
2. My country considers with interest and sympathy the measures which may be taken by the contracting parties, in the context of the future GATT negotiations, in order to contribute towards the lowering of barriers which in the field of international trade hinder or hold up the economic advancement of the less-developed countries, and in a manner suited to its limited possibilities, it might be able to join in some of the measures designed to facilitate exports of the products of those countries so that the benefits derived from the expansion of such exports can enable them to speed up their economic development.

3. Spain recognizes the advantages which the linear method presents as compared with the old procedure of negotiations on a product-by-product basis and is also in agreement with the principal recommendations made by the Council to the Contracting Parties. Without doubt, the ideal would be to achieve substantial progress in the reduction of customs duties as between contracting parties; but in order to achieve this goal the process cannot be identical for all the countries which find themselves obliged, to a greater or lesser extent, to protect their expansion or development. This accounts for the differences in the level of customs duties of the various countries and it would hinder any rapid equalization of them. The possibilities of each country in this regard are different and in order to merge them into a procedure of a general nature, provision would have to be made for different margins of elasticity for each group of countries as regards time-limits and exceptions.

4. For the reasons indicated in the preceding paragraph, Spain cannot undertake to make tariff reductions on the same footing as the developed countries. My country's economic situation and its development plan oblige it to maintain sufficient customs protection to permit the maintenance and development of economic activities whose existence is warranted and the creation of others considered as fundamental or basic for the Spanish economy. In this regard it should be taken into account that if the developed countries reach agreement for speeding-up the removal of tariff barriers, the advantages which might accrue to Spain from such reductions would be very limited as regards industrial products and in any event could not offset the difficulties which would arise for my country if for our part we had to make tariff reductions on these products on the same dates and to the same degree.

5. It is of great interest to Spain that the coming negotiations should relate not only to industrial articles but also to non-industrial products and in particular agricultural products, including typical Spanish export items, that is to say, Mediterranean products. Likewise, the negotiations should be extended to cover other restrictive trade measures which are of like or even of greater significance than purely tariff measures so far as trade in agricultural products is concerned. In addition, the more developed countries should not include among the exceptions to their tariff reductions or to the removal of other restrictive trade measures, products which are of considerable significance in Spain's export trade.
6. Taking into consideration, on the one hand, the benefits which Spain could obtain for its export products on the basis of the principles set forth above; and, on the other hand, the disadvantages which might result for Spain's economic development from the partial adoption of the reductions agreed to among themselves by the other contracting parties, it might be possible to determine to what extent we would be in a position to offer reductions and facilities which our economy might be able to bear in regard to products imported into Spain.

7. If one takes in conjunction all the measures previously referred to among those of a general nature to be considered at the forthcoming tariff conference, and those which can only be taken in full by the more developed countries, Spain will be prepared to co-operate in the forthcoming negotiations and wishes to take an active part in such committees and working parties as may be established to determine the rules and provisions which would govern the negotiations and examine the specific problems which each country or group of countries presents according to its economic situation.

END